WE CLAIM:

1. An audio conferencing method in a hybrid network, said hybrid network having a plurality of endpoints connected to an audio conference therein, said audio conferencing method comprising the steps of:

receiving in a bridge server input from at least one endpoint in said plurality of endpoints connected to the audio conference;

selecting in said bridge server an MCU to mix said received input;

returning from said MCU a voice stream to each of said plurality of endpoints connected to the audio conference.

2. The method of claim 1 further supporting full service audio conferencing using a reservation system and a call agent.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the reservation system and the call agent are tightly integrated.

4. The method of claim 2 wherein the reservation system and the call agent are loosely integrated.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein said selected MCU is selected from an MCU pool.

6. The method of claim 1 further including the step of dynamically routing an operator voice path to service multiple MCUs.

7. The method of claim 1 further including the step of renegotiating the destination of a voice path to move an audio conference participant from said selected MCU to a second MCU.

8. The method of claim 1 further including the step of moving said audio conference from said selected MCU to a second MCU.

9. The method of claim 1 further including the steps of:

providing said audio conference to a streaming protocol server from said selected MCU;

connecting a passive participant to said streaming protocol server; and

broadcasting said audio conference from said streaming protocol server to a passive participant.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein said plurality of endpoints has both circuit-switched endpoints and packet-based endpoints.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein said MCU is part of a bridge server having a media gateway therein.

12. An audio conferencing method in a hybrid network, said hybrid network having a plurality of endpoints connected to an audio conference therein, said audio conferencing method comprising the steps of:

receiving in a media gateway input from a corresponding endpoint in said plurality of endpoints connected to the audio conference;

converting in said media gateway the input to an MCU-usable format;

selecting in said media gateway the converted input;

transferring said selected input to an MCU;

mixing in said MCU the selected input with other selected input to form a) an output stream, and b) a sum stream;

matching a) the output stream with the corresponding endpoint and b) the sum stream with other endpoints in said plurality of endpoints connected to the audio conference;

transferring said matched output stream and sum stream to said media gateway;

converting in said media gateway the output stream and the sum stream to an endpoint-usable format;

returning the converted output stream to the corresponding endpoint and the converted sum stream to the other endpoints in said plurality of endpoints connected to the audio conference.

13. The method of claim 12 further supporting full service audio conferencing using a reservation system and a call agent.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the reservation system and the call agent are tightly integrated.

15. The method of claim 13 wherein the reservation system and the call agent are loosely integrated.

16. The method of claim 12 wherein said selected MCU is selected from an MCU pool.

17. The method of claim 12 further including the step of dynamically routing an operator voice path to service multiple MCUs.

18. The method of claim 12 further including the step of renegotiating the destination of a voice path to move an audio conference participant from said selected MCU to a second MCU.

19. The method of claim 12 further including the step of moving said audio conference from said selected MCU to a second MCU.

20. The method of claim 12 further including the steps of:

providing said audio conference to a streaming protocol server from said selected MCU;

connecting a passive participant to said streaming protocol server; and

broadcasting said audio conference from said streaming protocol server to a passive participant.

21. The method of claim 12 wherein the output stream is a sum of each selected input from said plurality of endpoints exclusive of the input from the corresponding endpoint.

22. The method of claim 12 wherein said plurality of endpoints has both circuit-switched endpoints and packet-based endpoints.

23. The method of claim 12 wherein said MCU-usable format is TDM.

24. The method of claim 12 wherein said media gateway and said MCU are part of a bridge server.

25. An audio conferencing method in a hybrid network, said hybrid network having a plurality of endpoints connected to an audio conference therein, said plurality of endpoints having both a circuit-switched endpoint and a packet-switched endpoint, said audio conferencing method comprising the steps of:

receiving in a media gateway input from a corresponding endpoint in said plurality of endpoints connected to the audio conference;

converting in said media gateway the input to an MCU-usable format;

selecting in said media gateway the converted input;

transferring said selected input to an MCU;

mixing in said MCU the selected input with other selected input to form a) an output stream that is the sum of each selected input from said plurality of endpoints exclusive of the input from the corresponding endpoint, and b) a sum stream;

matching a) the output stream with the corresponding endpoint and b) the sum stream with other endpoints in said plurality of endpoints connected to the audio conference;

transferring said matched output stream and sum stream to said media gateway;

converting in said media gateway the output stream and the sum stream to an endpoint-usable format;

returning the converted output stream to the corresponding endpoint and the converted sum stream to the other endpoints in said

plurality of endpoints connected to the audio conference, said audio conference:

supporting full service conferencing in said audio conference to said endpoint with a reservation system and a call agent;

supporting dynamically routed audio signals within said packet-switched network;

supporting passive participants in said packet-switched network

supporting dial out from said audio conference to an additional endpoint.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein said media gateway and said MCU are part of a bridge server.